



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

Education

August 2005



PHOTO BY BARBARA RODEY

In March 2005, female students entered the newly renovated National Women's Dormitory in Kabul. The dorm has enabled girls from rural areas to attend institutions of higher learning such as the medical school, Afghan Education University, Polytechnic Institute and Kabul University.

EDUCATION SNAPSHOT

- Enrolled 170,138 students in the Accelerated Learning program, many of whom were denied an education under the Taliban.
- Rehabilitated Kabul Women's Dormitory to accommodate 1,100 women from mainly rural areas.
- Enrolled 8,000 students in the Literacy and Community Empowerment Program to provide them with literacy and skills training.
- Established the American University of Afghanistan, a private American-style university in Kabul.

OVERVIEW

USAID's education program was designed in 2002 to meet the urgent need for school building, textbook printing, teacher training, and accelerated learning for over-aged students who had been denied an education under the Taliban. This program has been expanded to include radio-based teacher training, higher education programs and literacy training for workforce development.

PROGRAMS

IMPROVING BASIC EDUCATION

Increasing access to quality primary and secondary schools is a key program priority. USAID is improving basic education through programs aimed at strengthening ministry capacity, improving teacher performance and skills development, and ensuring adequate school materials and environments for learning. To date, USAID has:

- Printed and distributed 35.7 million textbooks for grades 1 – 12 in both Dari and Pashto since 2002. An additional 6.2 million have been printed and are ready for distribution.
- Trained 6,800 teachers and enrolled 170,138 students, of which 58% are girls, in the Accelerated Learning (AL) program which has expanded to cover 17 provinces.
- Begun the establishment of an International School in Kabul to provide modern American-style curriculum to expatriate and Afghan children.
- Launched Radio Teacher Training in 2003 in three pilot provinces, and expanded it to all 34 provinces in 2004. This program currently reaches 65,000 teachers by radio and 10,496 additional teachers through face-to-face training.
- Funded three technical advisors to the Ministry of Education to improve overall quality and strengthen ministry capacity.

HIGHER EDUCATION

While considerable progress has been made in the past three years, quality of university teaching is generally low, buildings are in poor condition and schools lack furniture and equipment. USAID facilitates university linkages and provides technical assistance and infrastructure development at targeted institutions aimed at improving access to and quality of university education. Achievements include:



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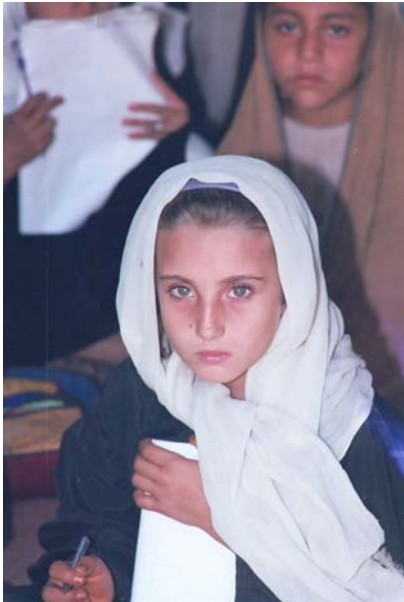


PHOTO BY NITIN MADHAV

Girls attend classes at newly renovated schools in Afghanistan. With USAID's help, 4.8 million children were enrolled in school by the end of 2004, many of them girls.



PHOTO BY ALEANDRO CHICHERI

The number of teachers in Afghanistan has steadily increased since 2002. Here, a woman teaches at an all-girls school.

- Establishing the American University of Afghanistan, a private American style university in Kabul
- Rehabilitating the Kabul Women's Dormitory to accommodate 1,100 women from mainly rural areas who will attend university in Kabul. The first students arrived for the new academic year in March 2005.
- Funding a U.S. university consortium in 2005 which will support Balkh University Faculty of Agriculture (BUFA) in Mazar-e Sharif, in their efforts to modernize curriculum, teaching technologies and techniques.
- Funding three technical advisors to the Ministry of Higher Education to strengthen and develop higher education policy and strategic planning.

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Afghanistan has one of the highest illiteracy rates in the world. In rural areas, where three-fourths of all Afghans live, 90% of the women and 63% of the men are illiterate. In many villages, 95-100% of the women cannot read or write. While USAID's accelerated learning program re-integrates out-of-school children into the formal educational system, USAID's large-scale literacy and occupational skills program takes place outside the formal educational system and focuses on providing literacy and skills training to older girls and women. Activities include:

- Training 8,000 students around the country in functional literacy, economic self-reliance, and grassroots democracy through the Literacy and Community Empowerment Program.
- Training 8,000 women in health focused literacy of which 5,500 receive further training as community health-care workers and midwives.
- Established the Women's Teacher Training Institute in Kabul in 2004 as a central resource for government and agencies to access training, materials, and modern pedagogical approaches that support practical and sustainable literacy, numeracy, and life skills.

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

In conjunction with the Ministry of Education, USAID is building schools in rural areas to provide easier access for greater numbers of students. To date, USAID has built or refurbished 315 schools, primarily in remote areas, since 2002. An additional 184 schools are under construction.